

REMARKS

I. Introduction

With the addition of new claims 29 to 35 and the cancellation herein without prejudice of claim 16, claims 17 to 35 are pending and being considered in the present application, since claims 1 to 15 were previously canceled. No new matter has been added. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the previously filed Information Disclosure Statement, PTO-1449 paper, and cited references, but note that one of the listed references, i.e., U.S. Patent No. 6,292,743 has not been considered. Applicants respectfully request consideration of this reference and an initialed copy of the 1449 paper clearly indicating that all of the cited references have been considered.

With respect to the rejection of claims 20, 21, and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, while Applicants do not agree with the merits of this rejection, to facilitate matters, the claims have been amended herein without prejudice to obviate the present rejection. Withdrawal of this rejection of claims 20, 21, and 23 is therefore respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 24 and 25 are allowable. In this regard, the Examiner will note that each of claims 24 and 25 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of its respective base claim and any intervening claim. The Examiner will further note that each of claims 16, 17, and 19 has been amended herein without prejudice so that claims 16 to 19 ultimately depend from claim 24. The Examiner will further note that each of claims 20 and 22 has been amended herein without prejudice so that claims 20 to 23 ultimately depend from claim 25. The Examiner will further note that claim 26, from which claims 27 and 28 depend, has been amended herein without prejudice to include subject matter analogous to that of claim 24. Accordingly, claims 16 to 28 are in condition for immediate allowance.

The remaining rejected claim has been canceled herein without prejudice thereby rendering moot the remaining claim rejections.

New claims 29 to 35 have been added. Claims 29 to 35 do not add new matter and are supported by the present application, including specification, as originally filed. Claims 29 to 33 ultimately depend from claim 25 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 25. Claim 34, from which claim 35 depends, includes subject matter

analogous to that of claim 25 and is therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 25.

Accordingly, all of pending claims 16 to 35 are allowable.

Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of the claims as previously presented in a continuation patent application. Further, any disclaimer that may have occurred during the prosecution of this application is expressly rescinded as regards any subsequently filed patent application.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are in condition for allowance. Prompt reconsideration and allowance of the present application are therefore earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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